



University of Southern Maine American & New England Studies

Fall 2008 • Vol. 18, No. 1

From the Director

It scarcely seems possible that it's been fourteen years since, with much shaggier hair and much darker whiskers, I set up shop as a brand-new assistant professor in ANES. It's been a good gig. I feel fortunate to have landed in a place where I've been allowed—nay, required—to pursue my particular arcane bundle of interests in my teaching and writing. I feel especially lucky to have shared the seminar room with the kinds of students that ANES attracts, students who have consistently challenged my thinking while also indulgently tolerating my particular brand of lame comedy.

I'm in a retrospective mood because this year marks the twentieth anniversary of ANES's matriculating students and offering classes. In 1987, Joe Conforti arrived at USM and spent a year basically inventing what was then called the New England Studies program, and the doors opened in September 1988. Accordingly, much of this year's newsletter will look back at the past twenty years, including Joe Conforti's reflections on the program's origins and accomplishments, a timeline of important dates in the program's history, and some embarrassing old photographs of faculty taken along the way.

I also sent an e-mail to alumni asking for updates, and you'll see from the responses that they're an interesting and accomplished lot, as impressive in their lives and careers as they were in our classrooms. Our students and faculty, too, remain busy and productive. There's much to be proud of in our past and present, and I look forward to many more years of accomplishment. Let's see, I'm not due to retire until 2025...

—Kent Ryden

Twenty Years of ANES—A Look Back

In 1987, Joe Conforti left his position in the English and history departments at Rhode Island College to become the founding director of what was then the New England Studies program, which began offering classes in 1988. I sat down recently with Joe and asked him what stood out the most when he looked back at the program's founding, history, and development.

First, Joe commented on the "sense of excitement" that surrounded the program's founding. It was the only graduate program in the area—indeed, one rationale behind its creation was the fact that no graduate programs in the humanities or social sciences were available between Durham, New Hampshire and Orono, Maine—and the initial response from students was very strong, with a class of 23 students being accepted the first year. From the beginning, there was a strong expectation of a high level of scholarship from the program's faculty, an expectation that they have consistently met.

At the same time, Joe recalls, that first year was challenging as well. While he was developing the program, he had an office in Bailey Hall in Gorham, as USM had hired a large number of faculty in recent years and there was a space shortage on the Portland campus. When Joe arrived at his office, though, it was empty except for an air conditioner. He and the dean had to scramble around Bailey Hall to scavenge the basics: a desk, a chair, a telephone. He also had one-third of an administrative assistant, Dottie Sayer, who provided support for a suite of three offices. It was a busy year for Joe: he developed a curriculum, hired Ardis Cameron as the second full-time faculty member in the program, wrote grants, and recruited students.

Finally, the program was ready to run, and prior to the 1988-89 academic year Joe and Dottie, by now the full-time adminis-

trative assistant, moved to 11 Granite Street on the Portland campus, a building that had formerly been the office of Sam Andrews, USM's chief financial officer at the time.

I asked Joe what he was proudest of when he contemplated the 10 years of his directorship. First, he said, was the fact that, from the beginning, the program has attracted very good students, and it has had a powerful positive effect on the cultural life of Maine through placing well-trained students in important cultural institutions such as the Maine Historical Society, the Old York Historical Society, and others (many of which you may read about in the Alumni section of this newsletter).

Second, Joe mentioned the impact that ANES has had on the educational life of Maine. Consistently, about one-third of our students have been teachers, and they have brought what they have learned back to their classrooms. Also, as mentioned in the timeline on the next page, Joe had great success as director in attracting outside money from the National Endowment for the Humanities and other agencies for curriculum development and for outreach programs to teachers, content-rich activities that in turn enriched participants' classroom activities.

Finally, the program began at a time when USM, in Joe's words, was "on the upswing," when there was a strong sense within the institution that USM was on its way to becoming an important regional university. ANES, says Joe, played an important role in raising expectations for faculty scholarship at USM, particularly through the work of our own faculty.

Clearly, Joe has a lot to be proud of, as do the rest of the program's faculty, students, and alumni. As ANES enters its third decade, we look forward to continuing to build on the strong foundation that began to be laid in that empty room in Bailey Hall.

Some Highlights of ANES History

1987

- Joseph Conforti is appointed the first director of New England Studies

1988

- National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant for Faculty and Curriculum Development, \$50,000
- Ardis Cameron appointed second full-time faculty member in program
- First class of 23 students admitted

1989

- Second NEH grant for program development, \$25,000
- Davis Family Foundation grant for program development, \$15,000
- National Endowment for the Arts grant on Traditional New England Town Design, in conjunction with the Maine Commission on the Arts, \$45,000

1990

- Donna Cassidy's position is changed to a joint appointment between New England Studies and the Art Department
- First students complete degree requirements
- Number of enrolled students is 75

1992

- Thirty-six credit non-thesis track introduced as an option to the thirty-hour thesis or project track

1993

- NEH grant, in collaboration with the Maine Humanities Council, for Creating New England: Myth, Memory, Tradition, a summer institute for teachers and weekend seminars during the academic year
- Ardis Cameron publishes *Radicals of the Worst Sort: The Laboring Women of Lawrence, 1860-1912*

1994

- Kent Ryden appointed as third full-time faculty member in the program
- Name of the program changed to American and New England Studies

1995

- National Endowment for the Humanities Grant, in conjunction with the Maine Humanities Council and the Center for the Study of the Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi, for a two-year comparative regionalism program for teachers from the two states, titled *New England and the South: Maine and Mississippi*, \$220,000
- Matthew Edney is appointed as faculty member in ANES and Geography-Anthropology and as faculty scholar at the Osher Map Library
- Joe Conforti publishes *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Tradition, and American Culture*.

1997

- Ardis Cameron succeeds Joe Conforti as director
- Donna Cassidy publishes *Painting the Musical City: Jazz and Cultural Identity in American Art, 1910-1940*
- Matthew Edney publishes *Mapping an Empire: The Geographic Construction of British India, 1765-1843*
- David Richards becomes the first alumnus to earn a Ph.D. (History, University of New Hampshire)

2000

- Ardis Cameron is awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Senior Research Fellowship

2001

- Joe Conforti publishes *Imagining New England: Explorations in Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Mid-Twentieth Century*
- Kent Ryden publishes *Landscape with Figures: Nature and Culture in New England*
- Ardis Cameron is awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship
- Public Culture and History track inaugurated

2003

- Donna Cassidy becomes director

2004

- Ardis Cameron publishes *Looking For America: The Visual Production of a People and a Nation*.

- Joe Conforti is named University of Southern Maine Trustee's Research Fellow

2005

- Kent Ryden becomes director
- Donna Cassidy publishes *Marsden Hartley: Race, Region, and Nation* and is named University of Southern Maine Trustee's Research Fellow
- Joe Conforti publishes *Saints and Strangers: New England in British North America*
- Joe Conforti publishes *Creating Portland: History and Place in Northern New England*, which includes contributions from Donna Cassidy and Kent Ryden
- Matthew Edney publishes *The Origins and Development of J.B. Harley's Cartographic Theories*

2007

- Joe Conforti is named Distinguished Professor at USM
- Ardis Cameron is named University of Southern Maine Trustee's Research Fellow

Thompson Scholarship

The ANES program has been fortunate to have the Thompson Scholarship to award to a first-year ANES student who is interested in Maine history and culture. Given in the names of Mary Rines and Dr. Phillip P. Thompson by a family member, this scholarship celebrates their many contributions to the greater Portland community and their passion for Maine, its history, and its culture.

Karla Leandri Rider is the seventh recipient of the Thompson Scholarship. Karla is a 2001 *magna cum laude* graduate of Boston University, where she majored in art history. She also earned a certificate in museum studies from Tufts University in 2004. She has a deep interest in museum work and the cultural life of Maine, and has already worked at such historical and cultural organizations as the Museums of Old York, Victoria Mansion, and Maine Preservation. Karla's interests coincide closely with the aims of the Thompson Scholarship, and we welcome her to the program and look forward to working with her.

Slavophile Society Scholarship

The Slavophile Society of Maine has established a scholarship to help support ANES graduate students who are doing research on the history and culture of Slavic peoples in Maine and New England, particularly those who are working on theses which can be made available to the public. This year, Allison Ryall has been awarded this scholarship. Allison's thesis, titled *Red Labor: Labor Migration from Tsarist Russia in the Early Twentieth Century*, focuses on young Russian contract laborers who were recruited to come to the United States and who entered the country through the port of Portland. Since most students of Russian immigration have focused on political dissidents or religious émigrés such as Russian Jews, rather than on those immigrants who came in search of work, Allison's thesis promises to significantly expand our understanding both of Russian immigration and of migrant workers in Maine, and we congratulate her on receiving the scholarship.

ANES Students Well-Represented in Thinking Matters

In April 2008, nine ANES students presented papers at USM's Thinking Matters conference, an annual showcase of student research. Three students from Donna Cassidy's Art and New England Culture class presented research that they had done for that course: Katie Kornacki presented on *Currier and Ives: The Old New England Home*; Michelle Morgan's topic was *Depicting the Native American Body: The Panoptic Principle, Captivity, and Early Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture*; and Michelle Smith spoke on *Tropical Commerce: The Construction of Nature and Nation in William Chadwick's "Sugar Cane Harvesting in Cuba"*. Three more students from Joe Conforti's Workshop in Research and Writing also gave papers: Zoe Keefer-Norris's *Indian Motifs at Summer Camps in Maine* and Allison Ryall's *Red Labor: Labor Immigration from Tsarist Russia through Portland, Maine in the Early 20th Century*

were based on research for their theses, while Jeff Eastman presented his exit paper titled *A Cultural History of Folk and Country Music in Maine in the Early Broadcasting Era, the 1920s through the 1950s*. Finally, three students doing thesis research under Kent Ryden's direction shared their work: Ben DalPra presented a portion of the thesis he completed in 2007, *Poor Ti Jean: Mapping Jack Kerouac's America—Heretical Cultural Geography and Identity in Selected Works*, while Rebecca (Lamet) Lazure's *Advertising and Consumer Culture in York County, Maine from 1900 to 1919* and Anne Leslie's *The Meaning of Dickinson Road: One Dirt Road in Maine* were drawn from their ongoing thesis research. These nine papers amply demonstrate both the high quality and the wide range of research that ANES students perform in their classes, theses, and projects, and the faculty were pleased and proud to have the program so well represented.

ANES Student and Alumni Activities

Students

Michelle Morgan presented two papers at conferences this year: *We've Spoiled Your Prison For You: Gender and Anti-Catholicism in Early Nineteenth-Century Convent Captivity Narratives*, at the New England Historical Association (NEHA) meeting in April 2008, and *Depicting the Native American Body: The Panoptic Principle, Captivity, and Early Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture*, at USM's Thinking Matters conference, also in April 2008. Her NEHA paper was nominated for best paper presented by a graduate student, and an article based on it will be published in the fall 2008 issue of the *New England Journal of History*. In the summer of 2008 she was an intern at the Fifth Maine Regiment Museum on Peak's Island, and also participated in Historic New England's Program in New England Studies.

Jim Nelson's latest nonfiction book, *George Washington's Secret Navy*, has been published by International Marine/ Ragged Mountain Press. It tells the story of the early days of naval action during the American

Revolution and the small fleet that George Washington assembled in the fall of 1775—without telling Congress.

Allison Ryall was awarded a scholarship by the University of Pittsburgh to study Slovak and traveled to Slovakia in the summer of 2008.

Alumni

Elizabeth Bachelder Smith has begun her 16th year as pastor of Highland Avenue United Methodist Church in Gardiner. In addition, she is doing some research on her own on the topic of spiritual friendships among nineteenth century American women.

Felicity Beede is still happily teaching seventh grade world history in Brunswick. She has three children (Randy, Fern, and Angeline—adopted in 2007 from the Philippines) and a fourth on the way (from South Korea).

April 2008 marked **Tom Bennett's** 10th year as director of Prince Memorial Library in Cumberland.

Alan Casavant writes: "I am still teaching at Biddeford High School: Psychology, Twentieth Century World History, and American Studies. I have been teaching American Studies there for over 20 years, and I have used many of the materials from the master's program within my courses. I found that the courses that I took at USM were excellent in terms of materials and information for my high school class. In 2006, I was elected to the Maine Legislature from District 137, which is the coastal section of Biddeford and Kennebunkport. I served on the Judiciary Committee for the past two years, as part of the Legislature. I am running for re-election!"

Penny Davis-Dublin retired in June after 35 years of teaching English at the secondary level. She has also been appointed the interim scholar-in-residence for the LGBT Collection at the Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity housed at USM's Glickman Family Library. She wants to welcome ANES faculty and students to make use of the collection.

Gil Doughty is the manager of education programs at Greater Portland Landmarks. He has also been teaching history classes at York County Community College.

Martina (Morrow) Duncan is the assistant director of the Maine Humanities Council.

Tom Farkas is the communications and training coordinator for the Maine State Employees Association, Local 1989 of the Service Employees International Union, in Augusta. He is married to Sheila Farkas and they have two children, Eva, 10, and Alex, 7. They live in Pittston.

John Hall is finishing his coursework in the Ph.D. program in history at the University of Maine, where he intends to focus his research on literacy in colonial America. He will also be teaching a course on America and the Cold War for Kennebec Valley Community College.

Katie Kornacki has entered the Ph.D. program in English at the University of Connecticut.

Nancy Chute Marcotte is still teaching art history/media arts at Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School and is now on the Curriculum Coordinating Council for SAD #17. She is also secretary of the Waterford Historical Society, which is embarking on a year of fundraising to preserve its three buildings and archives.

Sue Melcher is still at Maranacook High School as an English/theater/journalism instructor. She writes: "I sent some of my ANES-required writing to the Stonecoast Writers Conference and attended the summer workshop in 2006; I then attended four other writing workshops, and have had articles published in local magazines. I have received further guidance in my writing, and am working on some pieces that combine my love of rhetoric with my love of the earth. I never would have embarked on such an enterprise had it not been for my ANES studies. Additionally, I am working with others on the formation of a non-profit organization to help people in Africa with sustainable living practices."

Cynthia Melendy (Richardson) will be teaching upper-level history courses in environmental history and popular culture at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. She has a Ph.D. in history from the University of Maine, and has previously taught in the history department at the University of South Florida.

Robin O'Sullivan, who is pursuing her Ph.D. in American studies at the University of Texas-Austin, has been awarded a Continuing Fellowship by the university for the 2008-09 academic year. The fellowship will allow her to have the year off from teaching so she can work on her dissertation. For the past two years, she has been teaching an undergraduate course on Wilderness in American Culture.

Laura Romano writes: "I moved to Muncie, Indiana, three years ago after my husband was offered a position managing media relations for Ball State University. We have two children (Nicholas is 4 and Alexandra is nearly 1 1/2), and I am fortunate to be able to stay home with them full-time. I also write a newspaper column and do quite a bit of freelance writing, mainly in the form of newspaper and magazine articles. Life is good here in the Midwest, but we do miss the rugged beauty of the Pine Tree State."

Wesley Rothermel is currently the chief financial officer of the Economic Development Authority, an enterprise of the Tohono O'odham Nation in Sells, Arizona, 60 miles southwest of Tucson. He notes: "ANES allowed me to pursue my interest in American Indian history and the issues the American Indian faces today."

Stephen Scharoun is a project director at the University of Maine at Farmington Archaeology Research Center. As a historical archaeologist working primarily in northern New England, he is focused on the study of rural landscapes and the places, people, and industries that compose them.

Michelle Smith is the communications coordinator at Goodwill of Northern New England. She has responsibility for writing their newsletters, brochures, and Web site content, and also organizes programs for members and conducts community outreach. She will also be developing exhibits on the history of Goodwill, poverty, and social services in New England.

Marilyn Soper writes: "I have been working in Keene, New Hampshire, as the regional supervisor for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of New Hampshire since 2005. Friday, June 27 was my last day on the job, as I have been hired as the executive director of giving at Monadnock, a nonprofit agency whose

mission is to strengthen fundraising and governance of nonprofits in the Monadnock Region of New Hampshire and to increase philanthropy. My husband and I are members of the local historic society and spend much of our free time exploring the architecture and landscape of the Monadnock region. We attend many Keene State College events and feel fortunate to live in this area, rich with history and opportunity."

Since finishing his experience in New England Studies, **David Soule** finished his teaching career and retired. He is a founding director of the Maine Irish Heritage Center in Portland and spends a lot of time doing private research for people researching their Irish ancestors. As often as possible he goes back "home" to Ireland and spends as much time in Connemara as possible.

Shirley Stenberg writes: "Unlike most alumni, my reason for returning to higher education in the '90s was purely altruistic. I was not seeking further employment; I just wanted to become a better docent at the Farnsworth Art Museum. What I learned from the wonderful faculty and students at USM during those years will remain with me for the rest of my life. In 2004, I was asked to become chair of the docents at the Museum and two years later to become a member of the education committee of the Board. I also served as a member of the search committee for the new director of education. Once again, I have been asked to become chair of the docents for the years 2008-09. My talks on Celia Thaxter and her life on Appledore Island were also well received. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to be a student at USM, as it helped prepare me to try to make the world a better place."

Rea Turet is retired and enjoying life in Durham, Maine, and New York, New York.

Dietlind Vander Schaaf is currently living in San Francisco working as an office manager for a plaintiff's law firm. She is just finishing an MFA in creative writing focused on short stories. Last year she completed the AIDS Lifecycle along with her sister Deirdre (another USM alumna), riding her bicycle from San Francisco to Los Angeles. (She notes: "Yup, I rode every single mile.") On June 12, 2008 she married her partner Kelly Palomera at City Hall in San Francisco.

Naomi Winterfalcon is still teaching at Champlain College in Burlington, Vermont, and will add Modern American Social History to her Western Civilization courses in the fall. Madeleine Winterfalcon is still at Middlebury College where she is an assistant in the administration and works for several of the deans. They bought a house last fall in Monkton, Vermont, which is halfway between Middlebury and Burlington.

Marie (Curcio) Yarborough is working for ScienceSouth, a nonprofit education institution in Florence, South Carolina, where she teaches hands-on science outreach programs in the schools.

Faculty Activities

Ardis Cameron served as a reviewer for the 2008 Andrew W. Mellon Foundation/American Council of Learned Societies Dissertation Completion Fellowships, wrote a review of *On the Line* for the American Historical Review (Spring 2009), participated in USM's Fall 2007 General Education conference, used her USM Trustee



Professorship to complete research at the Paley Center for Television and Media in New York City, and presented comments on the Food, Feminism and Power session at the Labour and Feminism conference in Stockholm, Sweden in August 2008. During her sabbatical she continued to work on and almost complete her manuscript on *Peyton Place*. She also spent three weeks in Spring 2008 driving across the northern coast of Spain following somewhat the 12th century pilgrimage routes to Santiago.

Over the past year, Donna Cassidy has lectured on New England art, Marsden Hartley, and American artists working in



eastern Canada for a number of local institutions, including the Ogunquit Museum of Art, USM's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Kittery Historical Society, and Bethel Historical Society. She continues

to research her current project, *Looking North: American Artists in Quebec and Atlantic Canada 1880-1940*, and gave a talk on Rockwell Kent's and Gertrude Käsebier's work in Newfoundland at the Canadian American Studies Association conference in St. John's this past August.



Joseph Conforti spoke to second year residents in community health at the Maine Medical Center on the history and distinctiveness of Portland as place. He also delivered a lecture on "Moby Dick and Nineteenth-Century American Culture" at the Maine Historical Society. The presentation was part of a lecture series organized by PCA-Great Performances, which sponsored Orson Welles' stage version of the novel at Merrill Auditorium. Conforti's first book, *Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity* (1981), has been republished by the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University in its series Classic Works on Jonathan Edwards. Conforti is working on a new book that focuses on his home town of Fall River, Massachusetts as a New England place.

Matthew Edney says: 'Having missed Maine for three years, I'm glad to be back! But I still have to commute monthly to my other job as director of the History of



Cartography Project at the University of Wisconsin. The general insanity is made palatable by my appointment last September as Osher Chair in the History of Cartography. I've published two studies of what historians often call the "most important map in American history," specifically John Mitchell's great 1755 map of North America (its origins in *Imago Mundi* 60.1 [2008] and publication history in *Cartographic Perspectives*, no. 58 [2007]); I also gave the annual Voorhees Lecture at the Library of Virginia, last March, again on Mitchell and his map. Other lectures in the last year were in Bath (UK), Bern (Switzerland), and Boston. The great exhibit,

"Maps," at Chicago's Field Museum (November through January) was the occasion both for a chapter on "Mapping Parts of the World" in the companion volume (*Maps: Finding Our Place in the World*, ed. James R. Akerman and Robert W. Karrow Jr. [Chicago, 2007]) and also the narration of some of the audio tour. It is truly weird to be explaining a map to someone, while other people standing beside you listen to you on headphones...'

Kent Ryden published three essays: *Beneath the Surface: Natural Landscapes, Cultural Meanings, and Teaching about Place*, in *Teaching about Place: Learning from the Land*, edited by Laird Christensen and Hal Crimmel (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2008); "How Could a Weed Be a Book?:



Books, Ethics, Power, and *A Sand County Almanac*", in *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* (winter 2008); and "The Environment's Place in the Maine Imagination," in *Maine's Place in the Environmental Imagination*, edited by Michael Burke (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2008). He was the keynote speaker at the thirteenth annual Teaching History in Maine Conference at the University of Maine-Orono, and was a panelist on the plenary session "Environmental History: Nature, Direction, Future," at the New England Historical Association conference. He also spoke on a panel in conjunction with the USM Art Gallery's show *Off the Grid: Maine Vernacular Environments*, and contributed an essay to the exhibit catalog. His crowning achievement, though, was being asked by a reporter from the *Hartford Courant* to comment on the history and significance of outhouses.

Internship Sites

Bethel Historical Society
 Maine Historical Society
 Maine Humanities Council
 Maine Preservation
 Portland Harbor Museum
 Town of Wiscasset,
 Office of Planning and Development

Theses/Projects Completed

Hannah Jones, *Playing House*

Kathryn Kornacki, *Almost Impossible to Put in Words: The Wartime Letters of Stanley Kornacki, 1942-1945*

Graduate Assistants 2008-09

Osher Map Library

Holly Hurd, B.A., Biochemistry, University of California at Berkeley and Ph.D., Biochemistry, Cornell University

Meredith James, B.A., Psychology, Clark University

Special Collections, USM Library

Cecelia Duchano, B.A., Sociology, University of New England

Ryan Farnkopf, B.A., Women & Gender Studies, The College of New Jersey and M.A., Humanities and Social Thought, New York University

Faculty Research Assistants

Laura Bowden, B.A., History, Green Mountain College and M.A., Chinese Studies, University of London School of Oriental and African Studies

Michelle Morgan, B.A., Arts and Humanities, USM's Lewiston-Auburn College



Commencement 1997. Left to right: Joe Conforti, Christi Mitchell, Aran Shetterly, Ellen Marlatt, Kent Ryden, Ardis Cameron, and Marie (Curcio) Yarborough.

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